

Louis Pantages

[Error in tape; side 1 would not play. Side 2 transcribed.]

A: I got to know most of the Greek businessmen and people in Newark. However, I was in that part of law that did not sit too well with most people because I represented insurance companies, and I became quite proficient in litigation trial work. As a matter of fact, I had very few Greek clients.

A: He would have starved if he had. We would have starved, unfortunately, if he had Greek clients, I'm sorry to say.

A: I'm sorry to say, too, but...

A: Remember the time -- we're still on.

M: That's all right, go ahead.

A: You had this one fellow -- I can't mention his name -- came into the office.

A: You want me to shut this?

A: Yeah.

A: Let me shut it, let me shut it.

(break in audio)

M: What big insurance companies did you have as clients?

A: Government Employees Insurance Company, United Service Insurance Company --

A: [Cumis?].

A: [Cumis?] Insurance, (inaudible), Hartford, Liberty Mutual.

A: You don't have it on.

A: It's on, I put it on.

M: That's OK.

A: Many companies. I was strictly a litigation trial lawyer and doing primarily insurance defense work. Occasionally I would represent a Greek as a plaintiff.

A: Who always got into trouble, (inaudible).

M: Don't worry about it, it's...

A: At least I didn't get into trouble with them. They never gave me the opportunity! (laughter)

A: Well, how come you did my case?! (laughter)

A: Probably the defendant was --

A: My mother, me!

A: Well, whoever you were suing, or --

A: We weren't suing anybody!

A: The claim must have been made by the company.

A: But you were representing me.

A: Representing your company, probably.

A: No, no. Mama said that Lou was representing me.

A: Your maiden name was?

A: Lamprose. And Nickolopolous and Kostopolous were the ones that didn't pay attention when I fell out of the car; it's a good thing my mother held onto me.

A: Isn't that strange? I don't remember.

A: You know what I remember? And I couldn't have been... I remember being in court and I remember your coming up to me and saying the fracture was from --

(break in audio)

A: No, it is not important. It's not important. Tell me something about when you were growing -- in other words, when you were in high school and working and going to college, your friends.

F: He still is in touch with two fellows from Plainfield High School, the [Letters?] and Dr. -- what's his name, from New York? We used to meet occasionally and go out for dinner.

M: That's nice.

F: From high school days!

M: That's great!

Q: But in Newark, besides working did you have time to socialize with your friends, through the Sons of Peracles?

A: The Sons of Peracles, yes. That's where I --

F: He was friends with my brother Tom, Tom [Adams?].

A: Tom Adams, Tom [Ardurus?] --

Q: Leon.

A: Leon [Javelis?], John [Skouras?], and the diner, we used to meet there.

Q: What diner was this?

A: The [Skouras?] Diner.

Q: Where was that?

A: In back of the Post Office.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah.

F: Broad Street, right?

A: Off Broad Street.

Q: Now [Skouras?] is down in Trenton now, isn't he? Or down...?

A: That's a different [Skouras?].

Q: That's a different [Skouras?], all right. Any...?

A: And then there were two Greek lawyers in Newark at the time, Jimmy Pappas --

M: That's [a priest's?] son, Father Pappas.

A: Yeah, and Nick [Cyrus?] --

(cross-talk, inaudible)

A: -- and there was another Greek lawyer.

M: Mike Pappas is [from?] Elizabeth. Mike Pappas?

A: Mike Pappas, it came later on. But Nick [Cyrus?] was from Elizabeth. John [Thiemus?] --

Q: Was from Patterson.

A: Patterson, and...

Q: They all had practices in Newark?

A: Yeah. Well, they all had offices with -- who was the accountant? Angleton. Angleton was the accountant who did most of the restaurants and all the Greek businesses, including the Paramount Theater. What was his first name? His office and Nick [Cyrus'?] office and John [Thietus'?] office were just above Nick [Kline's?] tavern.

Q: Where was that?

A: On Beaver Street in Newark. And I was their competitor, so they didn't (inaudible, laughter).

F: [Archers?] is where business and --

Q: Yes, they had the... Right.

F: -- and [Ester?] had the lingerie store and Marcus had the...

Q: Ester?

F: Ester had it. Ester Archer -- (inaudible) married name.

Q: [Kristokos?]. She had lingerie? I didn't know that!

A: Tom's parents had the Gordon Market store.

(cross-talk, inaudible)

F: That was a music store.

A: Music store, and then it became an appliance store afterwards.

F: But Ester, Peter, (inaudible).

A: (inaudible, laughter)

F: She had a lingerie store on the corner of Market Street and (inaudible) Street.

Q: Oh!

F: She was a very nice person. I saw her a few years back at Steve's.

Q: She's fine. I spoke with her. She was going to Greece. Her brother Peter, her brother has renovated the old home in Greece and he was having a party, and they were all going to have a reunion in Greece, and she said she would call me when she got back. Well, she hasn't called yet so I'd better give her a call, because she has a photograph of her mother's [marriage?] with --

(break in audio)

Q: Any memory that you have that you'd like to...?

F: You and Tom were friends.

A: Which Tom?

F: My brother, Tom.

A: Oh, of course! I was very close with Tom and [Manny?] Adams, and then there was John (inaudible), who was an engineer with [Crucible?], and he -- I used to meet him and we used to walk up and down Broad Street in the evenings in the summertime.

F: Those were the days when women get dressed up to go downtown and wear gloves. My mother would go down very often in the evening to come home with my father and all dressed up, you know, and those were the days you would give... We lived in [Chancellor?] Avenue (inaudible). She'd give my brother Peter and me a nickel -- we're five years old -- to take the bus down. My father's secretary would meet us, take us to lunch, and to a movie. Up about a block and a half away was a little market. She'd give us a nickel to go up and buy a loaf of bread. Every time I buy bread to this day I think of the nickel (laughter) for the bread! You know, talk about inflation! That was 50 or more years ago, but Newark was such a lovely, beautiful place.

Q: It was! What did you do when you walked up and down?

F: (laughter) Look at the girls! What do you mean, what'd they do?!

A: Nothing much.

Q: Just walking.

A: The other thing that stands out in my mind was that the Greek community, as far as lawyers were concerned, were primarily going to non-Greek lawyers. As I say, if I had to depend on Greek clients I would have starved to death, but fortunately I was with a firm that was growing and I grew with it.

Q: Why do you think they went to non-Greek lawyers? Were they afraid a Greek might know [their business?]?

F: Are we on?

Q: No, it should be honest.

A: They didn't want information to get out.

(cross-talk, inaudible)

Q: And they also thought --

A: I had more Jewish clients than I had Greek clients, and more corporate clients, business insurance companies, than Greek clients. As a matter of fact, Greek clients I could count on my hand, one hand.

F: There was [Krisakros?] in there, George [Krisakros?]. Did you hear of him? He was a lawyer.

A: He was an old timer.

F: An old timer, older than my father.

Q: I've been looking through the New Jersey directory --

F: His wife was not Greek. She was a principal of a school.

(break in audio)

(cross-talk, inaudible)

F: But they had to... (inaudible)?

A: No.

Q: Well, Dr. -- what was his name again?

(cross-talk, inaudible)

A: Well, [we were to?] find out some information about that position.

(break in audio)

A: I'm the only Greek in New Jersey who is a full-time member of the American College of Trial Lawyers.

F: And the first Greek ever to be in it.

Q: That's terrific! You know what? Maybe one of --

(break in audio)

End - Louis Pantages

